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SUBJECT: SECURITY COUNCIL CONSIDERS FUTURE OF PEACEKEEPING

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Security Council members and invited speakers considered in lengthy January 22-23 sessions the state of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Participants agreed that a decade of dramatic expansion in UN peacekeeping efforts leaves the Council overdue for a systematic stocktaking of PKO performance and direction. The UK and French missions have committed to steering a Council effort over the next several months to undertake such a review. Aside from a shared desire to improve the quality of communication among UN entities involved in peacekeeping, no consensus about reform was reached and no specific proposals formally put forward. The following is a summary of significant commentary by participants. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) On January 22, the French Mission hosted a half-day informal "Seminar on UN Peacekeeping." Participants included all Security Council members (Ambassador DiCarlo and DepPolCouns for USUN), U/SYG for Peacekeeping LeRoy, U/SYG for Field Support Malcorra, A/SYG for Peacekeeping Mulet, former U/SYG for Peacekeeping Guehenno, SRSG for MINUSTAH (Haiti) Annabi, SRSG for UNMIL (Liberia) Loj, and representatives from the Center on International Cooperation and Security Council Reports. On January 23, Security Council President for January France presided over an open debate on the agenda item "UN Peacekeeping Operations." In addition to Council members, participants included representatives India, Pakistan, Jordan, Nigeria, Uruguay, the Czech Republic (as European Union President), Morocco (as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement), Canada (as Chair of UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations), and the African Union along with LeRoy, Malcorra, and Annabi. The UK and French missions jointly drafted and circulated two non-papers totaling four pages in advance of the two sessions, one entitled simply "non-paper" and the other entitled "Effective Strategic Oversight."

January 22 Informal Session: Is There A Crisis In
Peacekeeping?

¶3. (SBU) UK PermRep Sawers told participants in the January 22 seminar that the UK and France had concluded that the rapid expansion of UN peacekeeping operations (UNPKO) risked "overwhelming the system" unless the Security Council took measures: to become better informed about situations potentially warranting deployment of UNPKO's; to produce better mandates; and to better oversee PKO's once established. Sawers cited the recent Security Council resolution on Chad (UNSCR 1861) as a model of what he called

a new type of "bottom-up" resolution that includes a clear mandate, performance benchmarks, timelines, and performance reviews. He suggested that UN missions in DRC and Darfur could be reviewed with these criteria in mind when they were up for renewal and that any PKO that may be created for Somalia be similarly constructed. French PermRep Ripert agreed with Sawers assessment except that Ripert thought the recent renewal of MONUC's mandate in DRC (UNSCR 1856) also exemplified this new approach. (NOTE. France was the primary drafter of both 1856 and 1861. END NOTE.)

14. (SBU) MINUSTAH SRSR Hedi Annabi, who previously served as Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping, criticized the French/UK non-papers as "reading like they were written by NATO or the EU" in that they focused almost exclusively on military aspects of PKO's whereas "the UN is actually being given a huge range of non-military tasks to fix the civil society aspects of failed states." He said the Council needs to ask itself whether UNPKO's are being given the resources to carry out these non-military tasks. UNMIL SRSR Margrethe Loj, who served as PermRep of Denmark during its 2006-07 tenure on the Security Council, agreed that the non-papers were overly focused on the military aspects of peacekeeping and overlooked the greatly expanded police and civilian components of UNPKO's. This perspective, she added, was consistent with what she sees as the Council's failure to provide adequate resources to field operations in these non-military areas.

15. (SBU) UN Under Secretary-General for Field Support Suzanna Malcorra said she sees UNPKO expansion as straining capacity in the way the new UN Department of Field Support (DFS) does business. She said DFS finds itself caught between the

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Security Council's urgent mandates and the General Assembly's leisurely approach to budget matters. This tension, she said, often leaves her with an "unfair choice between getting things done and following the rules and regulations." She said that correcting this situation requires significant change in the way DFS is allowed to do business, starting with DFS' implementation of the new Somalia resolution (USUN 1863), so that "we can have accountability and fairness but still get things done." She insisted, however, that a need for change is not reflective of a crisis and congratulated Council members for focusing on the need for improvement in UN peacekeeping before a crisis arose.

16. (SBU) Former UN Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Jean-Marie Guehenno argued that PKO's too often are geared to the achievement of "fuzzy" political end-states reflective of lack of unity within the Security Council as mandates are developed. Guehenno was critical of what he saw as a Council trend to create "more dangerous missions with expansive mandates." He saw some of these mandate objectives, particularly the protection of civilians, as laudable goals but poorly conceived and executed. He offered two pieces of advice to Council members should the Council insist on continuing to issue expanded mandates. First, he said there needs to be much stronger interaction between political planning and military planning because "you can't expect clear military answers to vague political questions." Second, he suggested the Council cannot demonstrate unity of purpose as long as one set of countries is seen as making military decisions while another set of countries sends troops to carry them out. He said "traditional troop contributing countries will be far less willing to take these increased risks if the risks are not shared."

17. (SBU) When the floor was opened to comments, Chinese Deputy PermRep Liu Zhenmin quickly returned to Guehenno's criticism of expanded UNPKO mandates, saying, "Some crises are not real crises but just internal disorders. Some mandates are too wide with Security Council members wanting to add elements -- protection of civilians and human rights for example -- with no thought to repercussions or costs."

While no Council member expressly supported China's position, SRSB Loy warned against a tendency to make mandates into "Christmas trees" with members adding national ornaments at the last minute that often demanded vagueness as the price of consensus. She thought that "the famous protection of civilians" was such a case of a vague mandate element that could have been clarified had the Secretariat been more substantively involved in deliberations at an earlier stage.

18. (SBU) Ambassador DiCarlo agreed that UNPKO mandates are becoming progressively broader and troop contributors are becoming increasingly difficult to identify to the point, in Darfur, where a mission finds itself unable to carry out significant aspects of its mandate. She said recent experience had made clear to the U.S. that member states and various mission-specific "friends" groups are not technically and legally set-up to easily coordinate efforts with UN organs even when all parties concerned were determined to work together. She pointed to the need to find a more systematic way to build capacity of potential troop contributors. She urged the Secretariat to continue a recent trend towards providing technical briefings on particular PKO's.

19. (SBU) Russian Deputy PermRep Dolgov called for benchmarks to be more routinely included in Council mandates for UNPKO's but said doing so would create a related concern about how to evaluate performance. He said "the Council needs more consultations with the Secretariat as reports are being composed." A defensive Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Edmond Mulet listed more than a dozen regular briefings made available by the Secretariat to Council members, concluding that "maybe members are not aware of all these briefings and maybe the quality can be improved, but they are available." SRSB Loy suggested that the Council's internal consultations are "generally a waste of time" because representatives merely read statements from their capitals. She added that Secretariat meetings with troop contributors are usually even less substantive. She cautioned against institutionalizing benchmarks in mandates if their language is open to political interpretation and

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concluded that "we don't need more pointless bureaucracy."

January 23 Open Debate: It May Not Be Broke, But It Could Use Fixing

10. (SBU) U/SYG LeRoy was the featured speaker at the January 23 Council session. He said plainly that "I believe 2009 is a pivotal year for peacekeeping. A number of our missions face risks that are so significant that there is potential for mission failure, with terrible consequences for the United Nations." He said UN peacekeeping faces "operational overstretch and, I would argue, political overstretch too." He sees the operational problems as the more immediate threat to existing missions and largely deferred to U/SYG Malcorra to detail these. The political problems he sees as stemming from insertion of a peacekeeping operation into complex conflicts where parties are often unwilling to seek peace and where international community divisions mirror differences between the parties. The frequent result, he said, is that "for many of our missions, there is no consensus in the international community regarding the optimal political direction." He offered two action recommendations for Council consideration: (1) find innovative ways to secure troops and other resources and to urgently deploy both as needed to existing peacekeeping and political missions and (2) attempt to fashion a better convergence of views among relevant players (Secretariat, troop and police contributors, the 4th and 5th committees of the General Assembly, and the Security Council) about what UN peacekeeping can and cannot achieve.

11. (SBU) Accepting LeRoy's invitation to describe

operational issues faced by the newly created Department of Field Support, Malcorra agreed that the challenges are daunting, but she fell well short of alleging that mission failure was a real threat. She acknowledged that the UN's newest peacekeeping missions -- UNAMID and MINURCAT -- "are two of the most complex and difficult missions ever contemplated by the UN." But she conveyed confidence that the UN would meet the challenge, in part by DFS finding logistical economies of scale between missions and by the UN hierarchy granting DFS the regulatory flexibility to take advantage of them.

¶12. (SBU) UK PermRep Sawers offered a summary of themes he thought emerged from the previous day's seminar, including: a need for better information flow and better military advice; a need for more clear mandates with completion strategies and benchmarks; a need for there to be "a peace to keep" rather than allowing peacekeeping deployment in a war zone in the hope that peace would emerge.

¶13. (SBU) Russian PermRep Churkin thought that the challenges facing UN peacekeeping demanded stronger UN partnerships with regional organizations and better management of relations among the Security Council, the Secretariat, and troop contributing countries with regard to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of peacekeeping missions. He suggested that the Security Council suffered from a lack of quality military advice and urged revitalization of the Military Staff Committee (MSC) by involving all 15 Council members and including the MSC in drawing up all aspects of peacekeeping missions.

¶14. (SBU) Ambassador DiCarlo pledged U.S. cooperation with the Secretariat's "New Horizon Project," a joint DFS/DPKO effort to look at challenges facing UN peacekeeping over the next two to five years and acknowledged that "despite all our concerted efforts to improve peacekeeping practice, we cannot say, more than eight years after the Brahimi report was issued, that we have fully succeeded in institutionalizing its call for 'clear, credible, and achievable mandates.'" She called for the Council to include specific benchmarks whenever possible in creating new peacekeeping mandates as a means of enhancing UN capacity to undertake and evaluate complicated mandates. Finally, she called for concerted effort to improve the operational capacity of available peacekeeping troops so that member states willing to assume peacekeeping risks would have the wherewithal to deploy.

¶15. (SBU) Ugandan PermRep Butagira said that the mandate

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decision-making process "must not be the sole prerogative of a few members of the Security Council" but must be "more broad-based and the consultative process even more so." Japanese PermRep Takasu said that Japan, as chair of the Security Council's Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations will "take a hard look at mission-specific operational issues..." Austrian PermRep Mayr-Harting endorsed the increased use of benchmarks in constructing mandates and heightened attention to the protection of civilian populations by peacekeeping forces.

¶16. (SBU) French PermRep Ripert said he had a "global agreement of the Council" that the UK and France should act as a kind a Secretariat for this initiative and they would therefore jointly revise and recirculate their non-papers.

¶17. (SBU) Several non-Council members also participated. Canadian PermRep McNee announced that Canada would launch its own "informal thematic series on effective peacekeeping operations" and endorsed the recommendation of the recent "Prodi Report" that more sustainable funding be found for regional peace support operations mandated by the UN. The Indian representative argued that "the Charter visualized peacekeeping as a tool jointly invented and honed by the Council and the General Assembly. It was not intended to be

an attribute of the power accorded to the Council by the Charter." Nigerian PermRep Onemola complained that "it has become apparent that those who provide the material resources and logistics support for peacekeeping have captured the peacekeeping process and relegated the welfare of peacekeepers to the background...Attention and respect must revert to the peacekeepers..."

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